

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend paragraph [0008] as follows.

-- Conventional attempts to avoid these problems typically involve removing the lid and setting it loosely on the bowl, prior to heating the contents of the container. However, if the lid is not offset relative to the bowl during heating, a vacuum can be created between the lid and the bowl, and the aforementioned problem of container deformation is not averted. Additionally, offsetting the lid on the bowl lessens, but may not eliminate the splattering problem. Also, when the lid rests loosely on the bowl, two items (~~we.e.,~~ i.e., the bowl and the lid) need to be removed from the microwave oven, both having the potential of being hot and, therefore, difficult to handle.--

Please amend paragraph [0013] as follows.

-- According to one aspect, our invention relates to a container comprising a bowl having a rim about its upper periphery and a lid having a lip. The lip has a continuous sealing bead about its periphery, and at least one vent region. The lid is configured for attachment to the bowl in a plurality of different orientations, including (~~we~~) (i) a first orientation in which the lid is attached to the bowl with the sealing bead in continuous contact with the rim along the entire perimeter of the rim, thereby sealing the container, and (ii) a second orientation in which the lid is attached to the bowl with the at least one vent region providing ventilation of the container.--

Please amend paragraph [0015] as follows.

-- According to another aspect, our invention relates to a container comprising a bowl having a rim about its upper periphery and a lid configured for attachment to the bowl in a plurality of different orientations. The various orientations include ~~(we)~~ (i) a first orientation in which the lid is attached to the bowl and forms a continuous seal with the rim along the entire perimeter of the rim, thereby sealing the container, and (ii) a second orientation in which the lid is attached to the bowl so as to allow ventilation of the container. The second orientation of the lid is offset about the vertical axis relative to the first orientation of the lid.--

Please amend paragraph [0016] as follows.

-- According to yet another aspect, our invention relates to a container comprising a bowl and a lid attachable thereto. One of the bowl and the lid has a rim extending around the perimeter thereof, and the other of the bowl and the lid has a lip with a continuous sealing bead for engagement with the rim. The sealing bead includes at least one stepped portion having a height offset from a remainder of the sealing bead. The lid is configured for attachment to the bowl in a plurality of different orientations, including ~~(we)~~ (i) a first orientation in which the sealing bead is in continuous contact with the rim along the entire perimeter of the rim, thereby sealing the container, and (ii) a second orientation in which the stepped portion does not contact the rim, thereby providing ventilation of said container.--

Please amend paragraph [0017] as follows.

-- According to still another aspect, our invention relates to a container comprising a bowl and a lid attachable thereto. One of the bowl and the lid has a rim extending around the perimeter thereof, and the other of the bowl and the lid has a lip with a continuous sealing bead for engagement with the rim. The rim includes at least one stepped portion having a height offset from a remainder of the rim. The lid is configured for attachment to the bowl in a plurality of different orientations, including ~~(we)~~ (i) a first orientation in which the sealing bead is in continuous contact with the rim along the entire perimeter of the rim, thereby sealing the container, and (ii) a second orientation in which the stepped portion does not contact the sealing bead, thereby providing ventilation of the container.--

Please amend paragraph [0042] as follows.

-- As shown in FIGS. 1-10, a container 100 according to one preferred embodiment of our invention generally comprises a bowl 102 and a lid 104 attachable thereto. The lid 104 is configured for attachment to the bowl in a plurality of different orientations, including ~~(we)~~ (i) a first orientation (see FIG. 10A) in which the lid is attached to the bowl so as to seal the container, and (ii) a second orientation (see FIG. 10B) in which the lid is attached to the bowl so as to allow ventilation of the container.--

Please amend paragraph [0046] as follows.

-- The rim 106 provides structural support to the bowl 102 and acts as a firm base from which the upward and outward flanges 116, 118 extend. The upward flange 116 provides a surface against which the lid 104 can seal when the lid 104 is sealingly engaging

the bowl 102. The upward flange 116 has a pair of notched or recessed portions 122 formed along the periphery of the upward flange 116 on opposite sides of the bowl 102. When viewed from the side, recessed portions 122 of the upward flange 116 have a lower overall height than the remainder of the upward flange 116 (~~w.e.c.~~, i.e., the upward flange 116 has "stepped portions"). These recessed portions 122 work in combination with vent regions 112 in the lid 104 to selectively provide ventilation to the interior of the container 100 when the lid 104 is placed in a predetermined orientation relative to the bowl 102. The outward flange 118 provides a grasping surface and facilitates easy handling of the bowl 102. The outward flange 118 is extended somewhat at the two longitudinal ends of the bowl 102 so as to form handles 136 for grasping and transporting the bowl 102.--

Please amend paragraph [0051] as follows.

-- FIGS. 8A-8C respectively show a right side view of the lid 104, and cross-sectional views taken along lines 8B--8B and 8C--8C in FIG. 6. FIGS. 9A and 9B are enlarged, detail views of the lip 108 of the lid 104. As shown in FIG. 9A, the sealing bead 110 is positioned above the hemispherical dome 144, adjacent the apex 120 of the V-shaped lip 108. FIG. 9B shows the sealing bead 110 positioned adjacent the opening of the inverted V-shaped lip 108 on a portion of the lid 104 that is not in the vent region 112. Thus, when the vent regions 112 of the lid are aligned with the recessed portion 122 of the rim (~~w.e.c.~~, i.e., the stepped portions of the rim 106 and the sealing bead 110 are aligned), the sealing bead 110 will be positioned near the apex 120 of the V-shaped lip 108 (as shown in FIG. 9A) and will not contact the recessed portion 122 of the rim 106. However, when the vent regions 112 are not aligned with the recessed portions 122 of the rim 106,

the sealing bead 110 will be positioned near the opening of the V-shaped lip 108 (as shown in FIG. 9B) and will therefore contact and seal against the bottom part of the upward flange 116, even along the recessed portion 122 (as best seen in FIG. 10A).--

Please amend paragraph [0052] as follows.

-- The lid 104 of this embodiment is attachable to the bowl 102 in two different orientations. In a first orientation, illustrated in FIG. 10A, the lid 104 is attached to the bowl 102 such that the container 100 is sealed. In this orientation, the vent region 112 of the lid 104 is positioned opposite the recessed portion 122 of the rim 106 of the bowl 102. Thus, the sealing bead 110 is in contact with the upward flange 116 around the entire perimeter of the rim 106. Specifically, because the sealing bead 110 is located adjacent the opening of the inverted V-shape over the portion of the lip 108 that aligns with the recessed portion 122 of the upward flange 116, a seal is still formed between the sealing bead 110 and the recessed portion 122 of the upward flange 116. The portion of the sealing bead 110 that is positioned adjacent the apex 120 of the inverted V-shape is aligned with the full (~~w.e.c.~~, i.e., not recessed) portion of the upward flange 116 and, thus, also forms a seal between the sealing bead 110 and the upward flange 116.--

Please amend paragraph [0053] as follows.

-- In the second orientation, shown in FIG. 10B, the lid 104 is rotated by approximately 180 degrees about an axis substantially normal to the plane of the lid (~~w.e.c.~~, i.e., "the vertical axis"), relative to the first orientation. In this second orientation, the vent region 112 of the lid 104 is aligned with the recessed portion 122 of the rim 106 of the

bowl 102, such that the sealing bead 110 is not in contact with the upward flange 116 along the length of the vent region 112, thereby allowing ventilation of the interior of the container 100. Specifically, because the portion of the lid 104 having the sealing bead 110 positioned near the apex 120 of the inverted V-shaped lip 108 corresponds to the portion of the rim 106 having the recessed portion 122, no seal is formed over this region and the container 100 is vented. That is, the inside of the container 100 is in flow communication with the ambient environment over the top of the recessed portion 122 and under the hemispherical domes 144, as shown by the broken arrows.--

Please amend paragraph [0062] as follows.

-- The container of the second embodiment functions substantially the same as that of the first embodiment, except that, due to its square shape, the lid is attachable to the container in four different orientations. In two of these orientations the lid 204 will be attached to the bowl 202 in a sealed condition, while in the other two orientations the lid 204 will be attached to the bowl 202 in a vented condition. Because the lid 204 has vent regions 212 on opposite sides of the lid 204 and the bowl 202 has recessed portions 222 on opposite sides of the bowl 202, the container will always be either sealed on all four sides or vented on two of the four sides. That is, the container of the second embodiment has a first (sealed) orientation, a second (vented) orientation offset from the first orientation by approximately 90 degrees about the vertical axis, a third (sealed) orientation offset from the second orientation by approximately 90 degrees about the vertical axis, and a fourth (vented) orientation offset from the third orientation by approximately 90 degrees, about

the vertical axis. These angle measurements are measured in the positive (~~we.e.~~, i.e., clockwise) direction.--

Please amend paragraph [0067] as follows.

-- When the lid 304 is attached to the bowl 302 in a first orientation, with the flange holes 311 positioned opposite from (~~we.e.~~, i.e., not aligned with) the through-holes 344 of the vent region 312, the container is sealed. When the lid 304 is attached to the bowl 302 in a second orientation, with the flange holes 311 aligned with the through-holes 344 of the vent region 312, the container is vented.--

Please amend paragraph [0069] as follows.

While the present invention has been described with respect to several preferred embodiments, these embodiments are provided for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to limit the scope of the invention. In particular, ~~WE~~ we envision that the various features of the several embodiments of our invention may be combined and modified to suit the needs of a particular application. For example, the bowl and the lid might be used independently of one another, or in combination with other lids and/or bowls. In addition, the size, shape, color, and/or material of the container may be modified to accommodate a certain type of product or class of user. For example, the shape of the container may be chosen to accommodate a certain type/shape of product, such as using a long rectangular container for carrots, celery, or the like, and using a round container for a head of lettuce. Alternatively, the shape might be dictated by the amount of ventilation needed or the need for the ventilation of the container to be adjusted.